vinced me that Richter had been—as the Americans say—"snooping around" in the neighborhood of our residence, and did not want any one to know it.

"If he should take the trouble to give you advice about your movements, you had better accept it, you can bet," declared Hahn. "Herr Richter himself is a very learned man, and has much knowledge about the aboriginals of Neu Pommern. Yes, my boy."

He grinned under his blond mustache, and offered me a cigarette. I guessed then that Hahn had been told off to hamper our movements and find out our plans; but, somehow or other, I never could help liking him. He was always so good-natured about it. And I had shot off the tip of his ear—which endears a man to you.

"Look here," I said. "I don't know the first thing about Gore and his plans. I do what I'm told, no more. I'm his secretary. You go and ask him anything you want to know, my son, and take what you can get. You can keep it all, with my compliments."

"The little English bull-terrier again," said Hahn, folding his arms on the back of his chair and grinning. "Powl, thou canst bite, but thou art no diplomat. By the way, did you hear about the wife of Herr Richter?" he asked, suddenly changing the subject.

"Your boss?" I asked.

"Boss?" queried the expert in slang innocently. "What is that?"

"What Justus Richter is," I countered. "Well? Didn't know he had a wife."

"Nor did we," declared Hahn, with a romantic tone in his voice which I believe was perfectly genuine. "None of us here in Kaiser Wilhelm Land knew," he went on. "Richter had been married—oh, many years ago—and a widower for many years had been. And two years ago, when he was going to Singapore by Java, the ship stopped at Ceram. And in Ceram there was cholera. Herr Richter got this cholera, and they put him ashore in Banda, thinking that he very shortly should die. Now in Banda there was no one should take him in, for they were all much afraid of a cholera patient, and I think he would have died at once, but that a lady—the wife of a Spanish settler—Herr Gott, Powl, you are ill!"

"I'm a little—weak—from this dashed fever," I said. "I only want to put my head down; it's dizzy. Go on."

"Now! This lady was not young, but she was good-hearted, and so was her husband, though he was a man very rude in temper at times. And when she heard of Richter, she and her husband said, 'This is a good work to do, so we shall take the stranger in.' And him they took."

"Yes?" I said. I felt I knew what was coming.

"She nursed him through that terrible illness," went on Hahn. "And at the last he was in collapse. Now out of collapse recovers hardly ever any man. So Richter, who is of just and noble instincts, said to her: 'I am dying. Before I die I would a will make, and leave my plantation in German New Guinea, and the money I there have invested, to you, because you alone have ran this so fearful risk on my account, and have saved me that I do not die like a dog on the jetty.' And the lady said, 'Right!' But see then, Powl, I am blowed if they could find a notary who would come into that house, for there is very few in the place, and they had wives and children, and they would not run such a risk. Then Richter he was dying further, and he could speak, but he said: 'A pastor must not have fear of death. Send for a pastor, and you bet,' he said, 'I will manage that thing.'

"Also the lady sent for the pastor, and Richter said, 'Give me some more cognac,' and they gave him. 'Now,' says he, 'bring down your daughter who has come home from school this week, and I will marry her before I die, and the plantation shall be hers and yours; but be quick,' he says to her, 'for I go.'

"But the lady was very quick indeed, for she was most poor, and she desired the plantation; and after a little she brings the daughter down,—who is crying very much for fright of the death,—and the pastor her to him fast and well marries. Then Richter says, 'That is well done, and now read me some of the Bible, for it's many years I haven't been at a church, and one doesn't know how far these things may or may not be true.' And the pastor he reads to him, and he prays—Herr Gott, he prays so strong that Richter falls in a good sleep, and the next day he is better."

I knew now.

"But, Powl, it's the most romantic story; for then the girl is sent back to school, and Richter said, 'I am glad that I am not to die, since that is a most beautiful bride; but, since she was never by me courted, she shall courted be.' And back to German New Guinea he goes, but he never told Donna Ravenna his name was not Schultz only—it was Justus Schultz Richter."

Hahn suddenly pulled himself up and appeared to consider, looking at me thoughtfully and pulling his mustache.

"You needn't worry," I told him. "If you think I can't guess why your Lecoq-Sherlock-Holmes-Schultz-Richter was masquerading about the Dutch islands under a false name—"

"It was his own name!"

"—well, the wrong end of his own name, then—you're jolly well wrong. I can imagine quite easily. Drive on."

"You want some more quinine," commented Hahn, looking curiously at me. "You are yellow. Aren't thou yellow just, old churl!"

"Go on while I'm taking it," I said, reaching for the bottle.

"Now see, then. In the marriage service of course the surname isn't used. But when Donna Ravenna and her daughter heard the bridegroom who was at the point of dying say 'Justus Schultz,' they took no notice, and the bride after him said, 'Justus Schultz.' So that was the Christian names, all right.

"And when he was better, and ready to go, he had thought that he would tell Donna Ravenna, at the point of leaving, 'I am not Schultz only, I am Justus Schultz Richter of New Guinea, and a man of much more importance than you have supposed, though in the interests of—'"

"Secret service," I cut in.

"Of diplomacy," corrected Hahn—"in those interests he has traveled under another name. But Donna Ravenna not long after paid with her life for that noble hospitality. She, also her husband, died of the cholera. Then Richter went away, most deeply annoyed, and to the bottom of his heart grieved."

"He had some reason," I commented.

THE quinine I had swallowed was not more bitter in my mouth than the whole of Hahn's story to my mind; but I did not choose that he should see me grimace over the one more than over the other.

"*Also!*" continued Hahn. "Again, in six months, he returned to Banda, where now the girl had come back for a little while, and with a governess friend was living, to wait for him. But he told her that she should meet Schultz in New Guinea, and she, who had no remembrance of him, since a man in collapse of cholera is no more like the same one in health than I am like a dead fish on the shore—she said she to New Guinea with Miss Siddis would go. For, you understand, there was now no money left for her, and she had not one thing that she could do. 'If he is a good man, as I think,' said she, 'I will try and like him, because after all I am his wife in law'; and she embarked."

Hahn laughed a little, sent a surprisingly vivid curse at one of his men who had dared to fall asleep, and went on:

"Then Richter went with her all the voyage, and not any one knew he was the Schultz she had married. So romantic is this man, who has indeed some gray hair, but the heart of a child. And not till they came to Rabaul, and were in the house of the lady to whom Miss Siddis is governess, did he speak. So now we all look for a merry wedding in the church, because the bride will have it, though she is indeed married before, and then a happy home on the plantation for Richter, with his so beautiful young wife."

"They aren't married again yet?" I asked, with leaps of the heart that turned me sick.

"No; but to-morrow I think they will be. This pretty girl is a little sad at leaving all her home. Still, by and by she will be more cheerful. Also, Powl, I have talked to you too long, my nut. You are looking worse. If I do not take those police of mine on to Toma, I shall not be there before the evening rain. So long; ta-ta; see you soon."

He tilted his white helmet forward on his forehead, bellowed to his police, kicked one or two of them to encourage the rest, and marched off down the muddy road between the ranks of palms.

WE were nearly at the longest day, it being December. Still, the swift dusk of equatorial lands had fairly pounced upon the town before Gore came home, a little after seven. He struck a match and lit the veranda lamp.

"Oh," he said, looking at me, with the inevitable cigar drooping from one corner of his mouth. Then, "Indeed!" Then he sat down on the rickety Austrian chair and bellowed for tea.

"You've been in Rabaul," I stated, being familar with the inhospitable ways of the German capital.

"I have," said Red Bob, leaning back in the chair, with his long legs stretching across half the veranda. He looked at me under his eyebrows, but never a question did he ask.

So, of course, I had to burst out.

"I suppose you're surprised to see me dressed again." Which I was, down to the pin in my tie.

"No," said Red Bob. "I'm not much in the way of being surprised at things."

"Well," I rushed on, "I've dressed because I'm going to Rabaul to-night."

"Who lent you the aëroplane, and can you run it yourself?" asked Gore, with every appearance of interest.

"What do you mean?"

"Only that the launch has come back, and doesn't run again till she's wanted to."

"I don't care," I said. "I'll hire a cutter or a schooner. I'm going to get to Rabaul to-night."

"They won't hire us any boats. That's what I've been looking up to-day."

"What!"

"Won't hire us anything that floats or swims."

"What for, in the name of common sense?"

"Name of Wilhelm II, more likely. We've bumped up against him somehow."

"Then I'll walk."

"By land," said Gore indifferently, "I take it to be thirty miles."

"Then," I said, breathing hard, "I'll go down to the jetty to-morrow at daylight, and if the launch isn't running, I'll make it run, if I have to shoot the engineer."

"I see your point," said Gore, smoking lazily. "But it's an unnecessary trip. She's disappeared."

"Good God! Where? And how do you—"

"Oh, the yarn's all over Rabaul. Wedding was fixed for the day after to-morrow—formal wedding, that is: lady was staying with the Hirschmanns, who employ Miss Siddis; lady disappears, and can't be found. No one seen her since yesterday afternoon."

"Then," I said, getting to my feet and holding on by the back of the couch,—for I was a little unsteady,—"there's all the more reason why I should go and find her, dead or alive."

"And give her over to her husband. Just so," said Gore, puffing pleasantly. "Where's that cannibal with the tea?"

I said something strong in contradiction.

"Yes, but you see," said Red Bob, "to find her in this country would mean just that—nothing else. The whole community's against her. What right has a silly little foreign girl to take a dislike to one of the most prominent citizens in the colony, especially when she's tied to him by a legal ceremony already? That's the way they look at it. Nobody would give her a hand."

"Where do you think—what do you think? Do you think she's—"

"Oh, no," said Gore, answering my question as if I had put it in words. "I don't think she has. I don't like thinking, anyhow. I prefer to know. Can't say I know in this case, but I've an idea or two."

"For heaven's sake, tell me if you have," I said, sitting down on the couch again. The great white stars among the palm trees seemed to be dancing about. The floor was heaving like a steamer deck in a heavy sea. I was not so strong as I had thought, it seemed.

Gore looked at me.

"It's a bad business, and a tangle," he said; "but—"

"It is not a bad business," I interrupted. "If you think it's a parallel case to—to anything you—"

"We'll leave it at that, if you please," interrupted Red Bob, with something slightly dangerous in his voice. "I was going to say, I think the young woman's made back to Friedrich Wilhelmshaven way. You see, the *Afzelia's* still lying at the jetty—going to sail on the home voyage to-morrow morning—and if she could stow away on board she'd be all right. I don't see what else she can have done. Every house about Rabaul has been searched; and as to getting off into the bush, she must know she'd be eaten if she got away five miles behind the town. Besides—"

"It looks as if you might be right," I said doubtfully.

"Well, you'll have every opportunity of finding out. We have to board the *Afzelia* when she calls here to-morrow morning. I'm going back to Friedrich Wilhelmshaven myself."

"What on earth for?"

"You hurry up with that tray, Bo. Put him there. Catch me two-fellow teaspoon, you black villain—why do you always forget the spoons? . . . I'll tell you what for when I've fed. My lunch and dinner to-day have been the smell of the meals in those dashed 'clubs' in Rabaul. Some of these days—"

He stopped to fill his mouth with meat.

"Some of these days," he went on, "there'll be restaurants in Rabaul where a stranger can actually buy a bite of food. Come, my son—you're well enough to eat a meal to-night; come on and feed before we talk. I'm going to tell you about the Schouten pearls."

I FOUND I was well enough, and that I felt like another man when the food was down. Bo cleared the table in a series of jerks and jumps, while we settled ourselves on the upper veranda of the house. It was none too secure, but you could not be overheard on it.

"Well," said Red Bob, stretching his legs out comfortably before him, "this is how it stands in a nut-shell. Our friend, Willem Corneliszoon Schouten, sailed from New Hanover to Vulcan Island. He didn't make a bee-line, though; at one time he ran pretty close in to New Britain. And he stayed a devil of a time about there—all things considered. And he used to stop at the islands now and then—the ship's log tells about it. He would go away from his men, and trade with the natives all by himself; wonder was he didn't get killed and cooked half a dozen times over. Now, the last time I was here, a year or two ago, I was following up Schouten's tracks a bit, for no particular reason. I was just taking ethnological notes, and followed his route. Well, on one of the islands—a good-sized place, marked on the map and named—I found a rock carving. Of course I thought I'd struck something lucky about native history, and I cleared it out—it was in wonderfully good condition, being underneath an overhang. What do you guess it was?"

"Something about Schouten," I hazarded.

"You can judge. It was an arrow, and a row of little roundish things that might have been commas, or drops of rain, or